GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2123
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2007
PITS CREATED BY COAL EXTRACTION
Mahto Shri Tek Lal

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether huge pits have been created as a result of extraction of coal by Coal India Limited (CIL) and their ancillaries, particularly by CCL, BCCL, ECL, MCL etc and have abandoned those pits unfilled;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for not filling those pits;

(c) whether these pits have posed a threat to the environment and the lives and property of the people of the area; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO)

(a): During the process of opencast mining, all voids created during excavation of coal are not filled up by backfilling and some portion of excavated land remained unfilled in coal mines at the time of closure of mines.

(b): Back filling of voids is done in opencast mines as the mine progresses. However due to presence of multiple seams and other reasons some exhausted mines can not be back-filled which in due course of time gets filled up with water from natural precipitation. These voids with water generally get converted into large storage tanks which caters to domestic and industrial use of nearby mines and colonies / villages.

(c): No, Sir. The voids that eventually get filled with water become the source of water for domestic as well as other uses for the habitats of nearby colonies and villages. Some such water bodies have been developed into nature parks and picnic spots also. These water bodies also recharge ground water tables in the surrounding areas.

(d): All new mines as well as expansion projects have to prepare Environment Management Plan (EMP) and get it cleared by Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). All mining projects have to follow the environmental stipulations and guidelines in accordance with the EMP. Apart from the measures taken for the pits as mentioned above, Coal India also takes mitigation measures by creating dense afforestation on the inactive overburden (OB) dumps. Avenue plantation is also done in and around mining areas to prevent dust pollution. Various technical reclamation measures have also been taken for many OB dumps such as re-grading the steep dump slopes into allowable slopes, constructing garland drain, toe walls and benching to stop erosion and implementation is monitored by State Pollution Control Board & MoEF.